

Introduction and Overview

This report provides an assessment of the Delaware River's support of various uses from 2000 through 2002 that are protected by the Delaware River Basin Commission's (DRBC) Water Quality Regulations, or by the federal Clean Water Act of 1972. The uses are: maintenance of aquatic life; providing a raw water source for human consumption; swimming and recreation; fish consumption; and shellfish consumption. The assessment primarily involves comparisons of several key water quality parameters with DRBC water quality standards and stream quality objectives. DRBC Water Quality Regulations also designate agricultural and industrial uses for the Delaware River. However, since these two uses would require less stringent water quality criteria than the other uses discussed, they were not assessed for this report.

In accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) *Guidelines for Preparation of the Comprehensive State Water Quality Assessments (305(b) Reports) and Electronic Updates* (September 1997), as well as their *Guidance for 2004 Assessment, Listing and Reporting Requirements Pursuant to Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act*, this report assesses designated use support in the mainstem and bay of the Delaware River Basin.

Assessed water bodies (assessment units) are placed into one of five categories. These are based primarily upon the totality of designated use support within those water bodies as well as the availability of data for assessing water quality in those water bodies. For each designated use, in each assessment unit, a number of water quality parameters, relevant to the use, are compared to the existing, applicable water quality criteria. The methodology used to make the assessments is presented in Part 3 of this report.